

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-36 and 38-40 are pending in the present application. The present Amendment amends Claims 1, 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 and adds Claim 40 without introducing any new matter or raising new issues.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 15, 22, 25-27, 29-31, 35, 38 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Stefik et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,233,684, herein “Stefik”) in view of Schneck et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,933,498, herein “Schneck”) and Perlman (U.S. Patent No. 6,363,480); Claims 4-5, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 28 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Stefik, Schneck Perlman in further view of Chou et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,337,357, herein “Chou”); and Claims 11-14 and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Stefik and Schneck.

Initially Applicants and Applicants’ representatives wish to thank Examiner Hewitt for the interview with Applicants’ representatives on March 12, 2008. During the interview the present invention and differences between the invention and the references in the outstanding Office Action were discussed in detail.

In addition, with respect to foreign priority Applicants respectfully request that any further Office communication acknowledge that the copies of the certified foreign priority documents have been received by the USPTO.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections of Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-36 and 38-39 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and traverses the rejections, as discussed next.

Amended Claim 1 recites,

An image forming apparatus formed as a single unit and connectable to an external apparatus that enciphers and sends digital data including data intended to be printed and a

program used by the image forming apparatus, said image forming apparatus comprising:

- a key generating part configured to generate an enciphering key in response to a request from the external apparatus;

- a storage part configured to store the enciphering key generated by the key generating part;

- a key sending part configured to send the enciphering key to the external apparatus;

- a deciphering part configured to decipher eligible data received from the external apparatus, based on the enciphering key stored in the storage part;

- a validity determining part configured to determine whether or not successfully deciphered data obtained by the deciphering part is in a proper format for printing or updating;

- a judging part configured to judge whether the successfully deciphered data obtained by the deciphering part is for printing or for updating;

- a printing part configured to print the successfully deciphered data on a recording medium after the validity determining part determines that the successfully deciphered data is in the proper format and the judging part judges that the successfully deciphered data is for printing; and

- a processing part configured to update a version of the program used by the image forming apparatus based on the successfully deciphered data after the validity determining part determines that the deciphered data is in the proper format and the judging part judges that the successfully deciphered data is for updating and includes data for updating the version of the program used by the image forming apparatus,

wherein the key generating part, the storage part, the key sending part, the deciphering part, the validity determining part, the judging part, the printing part and the processing part are each disposed within the image forming apparatus formed as a single unit.

Stefik describes a trusted rendering system for controlling the distribution and use of digital works. In addition, Stefik describes a system, as illustrated in Figure 14, in which encrypted print data is fed through a trust box 1403 before being sent in decrypted form to a printer 1404. Schneck describes a method of controlling access to data that includes user rights. Pearlman teaches a system of generating keys.

The outstanding Action appears to take the position that the combination of printer 1404, box 1404 and PC 1401 shown in Figure 14 of Stefik corresponds to the image forming apparatus recited in Claim 1. Applicants respectfully traverse this position.

Specifically, a structure in which the printer 1404, the box 1403 and the PC 1403 are separate bodies or parts as shown in Figure 14 of Stefik is completely different from the structure in which all of the recited elements are provided within an image forming apparatus formed as a single unit.

For instance, if the printer 1404 and the box 1403 which carries out the decrypting (or deciphering) are separate bodies or parts as shown in Figure 14 of Stefik it is much easier to intercept the encrypted data simply based on the fact that the data transferred from the box 1403 to the printer 1404 is no longer encrypted.

On the other hand, in the claimed invention, the data cannot be easily intercepted because the deciphering part is provided within the image forming apparatus. For this reason, data security is greatly improved over a system such as Stefik. Thus, the separate structure of Stefik cannot be used to anticipate the features of the claimed invention.

In addition, the outstanding Action states that the combination of Stefik and Schneck describes the validity determining part recited in Claim 1. Applicants respectfully traverse this assertion. Specifically, Claim 1 recites that the validity determining part determines whether or not successfully deciphered data obtained by the deciphering part is in a proper format for printing or updating. The outstanding Action relies on the idea of having viewing rights as is described in Stefik and Schneck as corresponding to the validity determining part, however, Applicants respectfully submit that “viewing rights” are not equivalent to determining whether or not *successfully deciphered* data obtained by the deciphering part is in a proper format for printing or updating.

In other words, in the claimed invention, the system has already been authenticated and the data has already been deciphered by the time that the validity determining part checks the data. Thus, the determination of rights has already been completed when the validity determining part receives the data in the claimed invention.

In addition, in Stefik, the PC 1401 which is considered by the outstanding Action as corresponding to the validity determining part of Claim 1, is connected to the printer 1404 via the box 1403. In other words, the PC 1401 is not provided within the printer 1404. In addition, although the checking of rights is considered by the outstanding Action as corresponding to validity determining part, this checking is accomplished using the PC 1401 and not the printer 1404, as is done in the claimed invention.

Thus, the combination of Stefik and Schneck, at least, fail to describe or suggest , a printing part configured to print the successfully deciphered data on a recording medium after the validity determining part determines that the successfully deciphered data is in the proper format and the judging part judges that the successfully deciphered data is for printing, as is recited in Claim 1.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the features recited in amended Claim 1 patentably distinguish over the combination of Stefik and Schneck.

In addition, Perlman does not cure the above noted deficiencies of Stefik and Schneck.

Independent Claims 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 recite features analogous to the features recited in independent Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29, and all associated dependent claims, are also believed to be overcome in view of the arguments regarding independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, even assuming that the combination of Stefik, Schneck and Perlman is proper, the applied references fail to teach or suggest all the elements of Applicant's independent claims as is noted above. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 6, 11, 18, 25 and 29 patentably distinguish over Stefik, Schneck and Perlman considered alone or in combination.

Further, the reference Chou applied in the context of a 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of the dependent claims does not remedy the deficiencies of the references Stefik, Schneck and/or Perlman, taken individually or in combination, as discussed above.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-36 and 38-39.

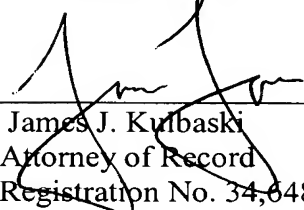
Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-36 and 38-39 is earnestly solicited.

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